

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 EUR-25 AF-10 OMB-01 SAB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 DRC-01 /127 W
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O R 031146Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1076

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0042

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ELECTION

REF: TEL AVIV 0002

1. UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATE OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS IN NEW KNESSET
BASED ON ABOUT 1.2 MISSION VOTES OF 1.55 MILLION CAST CHANGES
THE PROJECTION REPORTED REFTEL AS FOLLOWS: INDEPENDENT LIBERALS, 5;
AGUDAT AND PAOLEI AGUDAT ISRAEL, 5. ALL OTHER ESTIMATES
REMAIN UNCHANGED. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT UNOFFICIAL PROJECTION
OF SEATS ASSUMES DISTRIBUTION OF MILITARY VOTE ALONG ROUGHLY
SAME LINES AS CIVILIAN VOTE. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT
JUST HOW MILITARY VOTE WILL GO.

2. PRESS REPORTS THAT FINAL VOTING TALLY WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE
UNTIL JAN 6, DUE TO DELAY IN COUNTING SOLDIER'S BALLOTS. OFFICIAL
RESULTS WILL BE GAZETTED NO LATER THAN JAN 14. THE KNESSET
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IS DUE TO CONVENE JAN 21, WHEN FORMAL PROCEDURE WILL BE

INITIATED TO ESTABLISH NEW GOVERNMENT, BUT INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WILL BEGIN NEXT WEEK.

3. UNOFFICIAL INCOMPLETE RESULTS OF DEC 31 ELECTIONS SHOW RELATIVE STABILITY IN ISRAELI VOTING TRENDS. ALTHOUGH WAR HELPED IMPROVE LIKUD'S KNESSET STRENGTH, IT STILL LACKS SUFFICIENT SEATS TO CONSTITUTE ALTERNATIVE TO LABOR ALIGNMENT. THE GAP BETWEEN ELECTORAL STRENGTH OF TWO MAJOR BLOCS - LABOR ALIGNMENT AND LIKUD - HAS BEEN NARROWED, BUT AS OF NOW, LABOR ALIGNMENT APPEARS ASSURED OF DOMINANT ROLE IN FORMING NEXT GOVERNMENT AND LEADING ISRAELI DELEGATION IN GENEVA PEACE TALKS.

4. POWER OF NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) AND INDEPENDENT LIBERALS (ILP) HAS INCREASED AS RESULT OF ALIGNMENT LOSSES. WE ANTICIPATE DIFFICULT PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS TO REACH COALITION AGREEMENT, PARTICULARLY DUE TO CONFLICTING VIEWS OVER TERRITORIAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES. NRP CONTINUES TO ADVOCATE NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT INCLUDING LIKUD. ALIGNMENT LEADERS TO DATE HAVE REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL. NRP CAN OBSTRUCT RE-FORMATION OF PRESENT FOUR-PARTY ALIGNMENT BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE OPTION OF JOINING LIKUD IN FORMING ALTERNATIVE RIGHT WING GOVERNMENT (BARRING A SPLIT IN LABOR PARTY WHICH WE DO NOT BELIEVE WILL OCCUR).

5. SOME LABOR DOVES CONTINUE TO RAISE POSSIBILITY THAT NEW ELECTIONS MAY BE NECESSARY IN SEVERAL MONTHS. MRS MEIR REPORTEDLY REMAINS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THIS IDEA. FOR EXAMPLE, SHE IS WIDELY KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN MOVING FORCE BEHIND SECRETARY GENERAL YADLIN'S DISAVOWAL ON TV EARLY JAN 1 OF SUGGESTION RAISED BY DOVE SPOKESMAN AVRAHAM OFFER THAT NEW ELECTIONS MAY BE NECESSARY.

6. ELECTION RESULTS HAVE STRENGTHENED POSITION OF DAYAN'S RAFI GROUP WITHIN LABOR PARTY. WHETHER RAFI WOULD CONSIDER BOLTING PARTY AND JOINING LIKUD IS HIGHLY CONJECTURAL, BUT WITH WEAKENED POSITION OF ALIGNMENT, CONTINUED PARTICIPATION OF DAYAN IS ESSENTIAL FOR FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT.

7. ELECTION RESULTS HAVE SLIGHTLY WEAKENED POSITION OF SMALL EXTREMIST PARTIES. MERI MAINTAINED ITS POSITION; MERI
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(URI AVNERI), BLACK PANTHERS, THE JDL AND EIGHT OTHER MARGINAL LISTS FAILED TO OBTAIN MINIMUM ONE PERCENT TOTAL VOTES CAST. AS RESULT SOME SIX PERCENT OF VOTES IN EFFECT WERE WASTED. ONE SURPRISE WAS SUCCESS OF CITIZENS RIGHTS LIST (SHULAMIT ALONI) IN WINNING TWO SEATS, LARGELY BY EXPLOITING VOTER DISCONTENT WITH ALIGNMENT-ENTRENCHED LEADERSHIP.

8. INCREASE IN ARAB VOTES FOR RAKAH IN KNESSET ELCTION AS WELL AS IN NAZARETH AND HAIFA MUNICIPALITY ELECTIONS INDICATES GROWTH IN ARAB NATIONALIST SENTIMENT INDUCED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN WAKE OF OCT 6 WAR.

9. ELECTION RESULTS HAVE ACCELERATED TREND TOWARD RESTRUCTURING OF ISRAELI POLITICS INTO TWO MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPINGS, WITH FURTHER DECLINE IN INFLUENCE OF SMALL PARTIES--EXCEPT FOR RELIGIOUS CAMP.

10. IN SUM, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT MRS MEIR HAS REASONABLY GOOD PROSPECTS OF FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT WITH SAME COALITION PARTNERS AS IN OUTGOING GOVERNMENT, DESPITE ETREMELY TOUGH NEGOTIATIONS WHICH LIE AHEAD.
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